

REMARKS

Claims 1-17, 19-29, and 58-61 are pending and stand rejected. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-5, 8-10, 15-17, 28, and 29 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 62-233237 (JP '237). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner asserted that JP '237 discloses a coated fabric comprising a layer of rigid spherical particles arranged on the surface of a coated film, which is on the face side of the fabric. The Examiner also asserted that the film is made from polyurethane (see page 5, fourth paragraph). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections based upon this document.

Applicants have reviewed JP '237 and submit that the document does not disclose or suggest a water-resistant, water-vapor-permeable flexible substrate, as claimed. The coating disclosed in JP '237 is not a water-vapor-permeable coating. JP '237 discloses polyurethane and chloroprene as a coating material at page 5, fourth paragraph. As the skilled artisan would understand, polyurethanes encompass a wide variety of materials. Only certain polyurethanes are water-vapor-permeable, and there is simply no disclosure or suggestion of the use of water-vapor-permeable polyurethanes in JP '237. In fact, JP '237 never even addresses the desirability of making a fabric that is water-vapor-permeable. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-3, 15-17, 19, 28, and 29 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 64-45195 (JP '195). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

JP '195 discloses a fabric which possess moisture-permeability, waterproofness and adequate heat insulation. Moreover, an object of the invention is to produce a fabric which does not impede free motion and which has a resin layer of outstanding strength. The main object of JP '195 appears to be to provide a fabric having good heat insulating properties.

The introductory portion of JP '195 explains that in the prior art, although heat insulation could be obtained by incorporating an aluminum powder, etc., into the coated resin layer, this "alien material" detracted from the resin layer film strength. This is a construction which is apparently employed in the comparative examples set out in the last paragraph on page 10 of JP '195.

Example 1 of JP '195 incorporates a ceramic powder comprising titanium dioxide, silicon dioxide and ferric oxide at a level of 60 wt% into a resin. This ceramic powder-containing resin is coated in the form of dots onto a resin-coated fabric.

The properties of the two materials (Formulation 1 and Formulation 2) produced according to Example 1 are compared in Table 1 of JP '195. It is apparent that the object of JP '195 is achieved in that there is an improvement in peel strength between the comparative examples and the Example 1. However, there is no significant increase in rubbing resistance between the comparative examples and Example 1. The Scott type rubbing resistance tester appears to measure abrasion rates and counts the number of abrasions before the resin surface is damaged. The comparative examples give values of 1600/1700 compared to 1800 for Example 1, Formulation 1. For Formulation 2, the comparative examples give values of 2000/2001 compared to 2002 for the Example 1. Thus, it is clear that there is no significant increase in abrasion resistance provided by the ceramic powder-containing resin dots of JP '195. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7, 15-17, 19, 22, 28, and 29 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 3-56541 (JP '541). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner asserted that JP '541 teaches adding a discontinuous coating layer to the microporous film layer in the shape of dots. The Examiner asserted that the dots are made from a polymer material which is moisture permeable, such as polyurethane. The shape and configuration of the dots are not particularly restrictive. The ratio of the dot regions to the total area of the regions where no dots are applied is preferably 1:1 to 4:1. Finally, the Examiner stated that the dots have a size ranging from 0.01 to 10 mm²; thus, the round dots would have a diameter, or maximum dimension, of 0.1mm to 3.5mm, or 100 microns to 3500 microns. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants respectfully submit that JP '541 discloses printing a polymer material containing silver-colored pigment onto a microporous polymer film. Nowhere in the document is it disclosed that the dots have any significant thickness nor any particular three-dimensional shape. Applicants submit that as used in JP '541, printed dots cannot be understood to have any significant thickness and also cannot contribute to providing abrasion-resisting properties as

required in the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 24, 25, 27, 58, and 59 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over JP '237. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

JP '237 was discussed above and distinguished from independent claims 1 and 28. Since claims 24, 25, 27, 58, and 59 depend from either claim 1 or claim 28, applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn as well.

Claims 22, 24, 25, 27, 58, and 59 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over JP '195. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

JP '195 was discussed above. Since claims 22, 24, 25, 27, 58, and 59 depend from either claim 1 or claim 28, applicants submit that this rejection should be withdrawn as well.

Claims 22, 24, 25, 27, 58, and 59 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over JP '541. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

JP '541 was discussed above. Since claims 22, 24, 25, 27, 58, and 59 depend from either claim 1 or claim 28, applicants respectfully submit that this rejection should be withdrawn as well.

Claims 1-17, 19, 24-29, 58 and 59 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over JP 5-33335 (JP '335) in view of JP '195. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

JP '335 provides an adhesive agent layer between the fabric and a waterproof layer, and furthermore provides a discontinuous layer of vinyl chloride resin projections/indentations on the surface of the waterproof layer, of a height from 0.03 to 0.3 mm and of a printed area of no more than 50%. Nowhere does JP '335 disclose the provision of a pattern of discrete abrasion-resisting polymeric dots in order to protect a water-resistant, water-vapor-permeable, flexible porous membrane substrate from abrasion. As noted by the Examiner, JP '335 fails to disclose the presence of dots. Applicants submit that JP '335 furthermore fails to disclose that dots should be formed of an abrasion-resisting polymeric material and fails to disclose dots of a physical shape and size to reduce abrasion.

JP '195 was discussed above and fails to provide the deficiencies of JP '335, as discussed above. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that the combination of JP '335 with JP '195 fails to disclose or suggest the presently

claimed invention. Thus, applicants respectfully submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

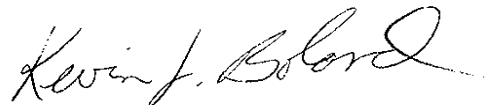
In paragraphs 13-15 of the Action, various dependent claims are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over D1, D3, and D4, either alone or in combination with Burleigh (U.S. Patent No. 4,613,544), Siniscalchi (U. S. Patent No. 4,775,581), or JP '335. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

All of the Japanese documents have been previously addressed. Applicants submit that none of these documents, either alone or in combination with the U. S. patents, disclose or suggest the invention as claimed in independent claims 1 and 28. Since the claims rejected in paragraphs 13 through 15 of the Action all depend either from claim 1 or claim 28, applicants submit that these rejections should be withdrawn.

As all of the outstanding rejections have been addressed and overcome, applicants respectfully request issuance of a Notice of Allowance directed towards claims 1-17, 19-29, and 58-61.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to telephone applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Boland, 36,090
W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.
551 Paper Mill Road
P.O. Box 9206
Newark, DE 19714-9206
(302) 738-4880

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